



Interview Summary: Diane Deans, City of Ottawa

Background

Councillor Deans is an experienced City Councillor, having served 8 terms since 1994. She was appointed Chair of the Ottawa Police Service Board (**OPSB**) in January of 2019 and was removed by City Council on February 16, 2022.

She was interviewed by Natalia Rodriguez, Jean-Simon Schoenholz and Guillaume Sirois on August 16, 2022. Questions about this summary should be directed to Jean-Simon Schoenholz.

During the protests, Councillor Deans was briefed daily by OPS Chief of Police, Peter Sloly. She, in turn, provided updates to the OPSB and the City Council. She also coordinated the OPSB's management of the crisis, called and chaired meetings of the OPSB, and communicated with the Mayor through his chief of staff, Mr. Serge Arpin.

The Ottawa Police Services Board

The OPSB is an oversight body which cannot direct day to day police operations or specific operational decisions. It completes tasks such as hiring and evaluating senior command, labour negotiations and budget approval, all in conformity with section 31 of the *Police Services Act*. The Office of the Solicitor General (**SOLGEN**) provided advice to the OPSB regarding its role pursuant to the *Police Services Act*.

Councillor Deans understood the *Police Services Act* as authorizing the OPSB to direct OPS' strategic and organizational plans, not ongoing police operations. As such, she was of the view that directing the police to enforce the laws in the area of the protest, known as the "red zone", would have been operational in nature and therefore outside of the OPSB's jurisdiction. SOLGEN staff participated in all OPSB meetings and provided an advisory role, especially regarding the OPSB's mandate. The SOLGEN never advised the OPSB that it was not fulfilling its obligations or mandate during the protest.

OPSB and the City of Ottawa

The OPSB is a separate entity from City Council. They are created under different statutes and the OPSB maintains independence from City Council. Nevertheless, City Council appoints 4 out of the 7 members of the OPSB (the Mayor (or a member of Council), two other members of Council and a person from the community who is not a member of Council) and has the right to approve the OPS's budget as a whole (but not specific items within that budget).

Because of political differences and personal history, Councillor Deans did not have the Mayor's direct number and almost solely communicated with him through Mr. Arpin. Councillor Deans and Mayor Watson never had one-on-one meetings during the



demonstrations until the day of her ouster when she had specifically requested a meeting to brief the Mayor on the OPSB's plans. It is Councillor Deans' belief that this impeded the City and OPS' capacity to respond to the protests and the timeliness of the response.

Councillor Deans never got a clear answer as to who told bylaw officers not to enforce bylaws in the affected areas. However, she did raise her concerns around the apparent lack of bylaw enforcement with City Manager, Steve Kanellakos.

Pre-Arrival Intelligence

Councillor Deans was first informed of the Freedom Convoy and its anticipated arrival by John Steinbeck, Executive Director of Strategy and Communications, OPS, and Chief Sloly on or around January 24, 2022. The item was not discussed at the January 24, 2022 OPSB Meeting, because the Freedom Convoy movement was still in its infancy.

Councillor Deans ultimately called a special meeting of the OPSB on January 26, 2022, because she felt that this protest was going to be different from the ones typically experienced in the National Capital region. During the meeting, the OPSB was briefed by Chief Sloly. Councillor Deans understood from that briefing that the OPS had no reason to believe that the protest was going to become a prolonged occupation.¹ Councillor Deans understood that there were about 600 vehicles in the convoy when it was at the Manitoba/Ontario border. Some were expected to drop out and others were expected to join as the convoy progressed through Ontario.

Councillor Deans personally raised further concerns about the Freedom Convoy to Chief Sloly before the first convoys arrived. He told her that he would be "very surprised if they are still here on Monday".

Councillor Deans did not receive any information regarding the extended hotel stays reported to have been booked by some protesters,² nor the INTERSECT information suggesting that this could be long term occupation.³ Councillor Deans does not remember specific discussions with the OPS or otherwise about limiting access to downtown or closing down streets to the protesters.

Councillor Deans understood from her various interactions with Chief Sloly that the OPS felt it had the resources needed to manage the protests based on the assumption that a prolonged occupation was not anticipated. Had the OPSB been made aware of the

¹ This was further discussed during Confidential Meeting 52 (OPB00001648).

² January 25, 2022: "truckers are starting to reach out to hotels to book stays of at least 30 days" (OTT00000101.0001).

³ January 26, 2022: "could go on for a prolonged period" (OTT00000259.0001).



possibility that the protest would turn into a prolonged occupation, and that the OPS did not have the resources to manage that, the OPSB would have asked for more resources sooner. Councillor Deans does not believe that there were any discussions with Chief Sloly or the OPS regarding the OPS's plan to ramp up the police response in case the protests lasted longer than originally anticipated.

Request for Additional Resources

The OPSB only started to realize that it was going to be a prolonged occupation ahead of the second weekend, when the protesters came in larger numbers instead of leaving. On February 5, 2022, Councillor Deans called a special meeting of the OPSB with Chief Sloly to ask him what he needed to “get the job done”. This meeting included an *in camera* portion.⁴ The next day, Chief Sloly said he would need 1800 personnel and provided a list detailing the specific resources needed.

On February 7, 2022, Councillor Deans co-signed a letter with the Mayor to the federal Government and the Province of Ontario asking for the 1800 personnel requested by Chief Sloly.⁵ Councillor Deans and the OPSB were not informed of the methodology behind the number of officers requested or the plan as to how Chief Sloly planned on using these resources.

When Chief Sloly said that there might not be a policing solution, Councillor Deans understood that he meant that the protests were beyond the operational capacity of the OPS. According to Councillor Deans' understanding, he did not mean that the OPS lacked legal authority to shut down the protests and Councillor Deans does not recall Chief Sloly mentioning a lack of legal authority or asking for an injunction. Chief Sloly was primarily seeking additional resources.

According to Councillor Deans, a greater number of additional resources were being announced by RCMP and OPP than the actual number of resources being received by the OPS and there was a delay in the deployment of the additional resources.⁶ According to Councillor Deans, there is a possibility that resources were being held up because Chief Sloly did not have a plan for the use of the resources. Councillor Deans also

⁴ Confidential Minutes 51 (OPB00001647).

⁵ Letter to Premier Ford and Solicitor Jones (OPP00002000 and Letter to Prime Minister and Minister Mendicino (OTT00004847.0001).

⁶ Blair Dunker email, February 13, 2022 (OPB00001013): “Attached for you information only, please find the most recent confidential deployment numbers. As discussed, there continues to be an issue regarding reliability of resources, and we are working to determine why there is such a discrepancy between what our partner agencies have committed and what is actually here and deployed/deployable.”



suggested that a bad relationship between Chief Sloly and the Honourable Bill Blair (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness) could be the cause of the delay. It was never clear to Councillor Deans why the resources were not provided earlier.

Earlier, after the arrival of the convoys, small numbers of additional resources were provided from various sources. Councillor Deans noted that these resources would come and go. For example, Toronto and Windsor officers went back to their cities during the protests that occurred there. When resources were eventually provided by the RCMP, Councillor Deans noted that most officers were assigned to protect federal lands and property, and only a fraction were assigned to the OPS to manage the protests.

According to Councillor Deans, it was not until the Integrated Command Center was set up that the resources really started to come in and things started to change in favour of the OPS and the City. Notably, the RCMP and the OPP brought a lot of knowledge in terms of addressing large scale operations, which was very valuable to the OPS's operations.

Chief Sloly's Departure

The OPSB hired Peter Sloly in 2019 as Chief of Police to be an agent of change. The OPSB was proud of this hire, but Chief Sloly faced challenges from the outset. According to Councillor Deans, Chief Sloly :

- faced racism from within the OPS and from the larger community as Ottawa's first Black police chief;
- Came from the Toronto Police Service and, as such, was perceived as an outsider by some factions: the Police Association, some rank and file police officers and some elements of the Ottawa community;
- was not the preferred candidate of the police associations (i.e. the Ottawa Police Association and the Ottawa Police Senior Officers' Association), who were frustrated with the OPSB's choice; and
- experienced difficulty building bridges and forming relationships with partners upon his arrival in Ottawa, e.g. Community Health and Resources Centres, some community associations etc.

According to Councillor Deans, as a result, there was infighting within the OPS and certain complaints against Chief Sloly were brought to the OPSB's attention; he struggled throughout his time and was never able to develop deep support from the rank and file and perhaps even the Senior Officers within the OPS.

When the Freedom Convoy protests happened, Chief Sloly needed support from within his organization, but that support was elusive, which caused frustration and a lot of stress for him, according to Councillor Deans.



A week prior to his departure, in a conversation with Councillor Deans, Chief Sloly expressed some interest in leaving the organization by suggesting that there were conditions upon which he might resign. The following week, Councillor Deans called Chief Sloly to inquire whether he was serious about his desire to leave. On the following day, Chief Sloly advised Councillor Deans that he was going to resign and they started working on the specifics of his departure.

According to Councillor Deans, the public perception towards the OPS before the protests was already poor. The residents were unhappy and complaining about the police services in Ottawa. Councillor Deans indicated that this general discontent only got worse as the Freedom Convoy demonstration unfolded and that the public had a growing sense that Chief Sloly was somehow responsible, which concerned the OPSB.

The OPSB had some conversations about Chief Sloly's leadership. The OPSB understood that under the Police Services Act it did not have the authority to simply dismiss any police officer, including the Chief of Police. The OPSB also understood that in cases of suspected misconduct it could suspend a Chief of Police with pay but it could not fire a Chief of Police. Around that time, Councillor Deans was aware that there was also going to be a motion at City Council calling for Chief Sloly's resignation and Councillor Deans' removal from the OPSB. This motion was being discussed by members of Mayor Watson's inner circle. Chief Sloly resigned before this motion was brought forward.

OPSB During the Protests

Councillor Deans and the OPSB sought multiple times to obtain the OPS's plan or timeline to get out of the crisis, but all they received from the OPS were "wiggle words", such as "we are working on a plan". During the protests, the authority to communicate with Chief Sloly was delegated formally to Councillor Deans. She communicated on a daily basis (or more frequently) with Chief Sloly, but was not able to obtain the information she needed from him, such as a plan or a timeline. Councillor Deans sometimes called OPSB meetings to provide updates to the OPSB as a whole and provided updates to individual board members on an informal basis through phone calls and text messages.

The OPSB asked a lot of questions of Chief Sloly and other OPS commanders, such as why the law wasn't being enforced in certain areas, but they never got clear answers. The OPSB did not issue any specific operational directions to Chief Sloly or develop additional relevant policies during the protests.

Councillor Deans asked Mr. Kanellakos why the trucks were being allowed downtown and was told that the City did not want the protesters to park their vehicles in



neighbourhoods.⁷ Councillor Deans also asked Deputy Chief Bell who told her that the OPS did not have a legal right to prevent the demonstrators from going downtown.⁸

OPS During the Protests

Councillor Deans understands that there was significant infighting within the OPS which impacted operations. Chief Sloly talked about this infighting and its consequences with Councillor Deans as did others. For instance, she was advised that 400 officers were mobilised at the Brookstreet Hotel to take down a blockade at the Sussex and Rideau intersection, but that the operation was called off because of infighting. According to Councillor Deans, the infighting was constant, but there were some flare ups, especially when the incident commander changed, which happened four times during the demonstrations.

The Mayor's Deal

On February 13, 2022, the mayor reached a deal with the protesters to make them move their trucks from the residential areas into the downtown area. Councillor Deans learned of the mayor's plan to make a deal with the protesters through Mr. Arpin, but she was not provided with more details regarding the deal other than the fact that the Mayor wanted the protesters to move their trucks away from the residential areas. When Councillor Deans learned about the plan, she raised her opposition to the idea with Mr. Arpin. Chief Sloly never had a discussion with Councillor Deans regarding this deal and she had the impression that the OPS was in the dark. However, Councillor Deans later learned from another source that Chief Sloly was aware of the negotiations at the time.

⁷ Texts with S. Kanellakos (OTT00010560.0001): Deans asks Steve K why trucks let into downtown: "The problem is that we don't have enough locations that could park all those vehicles and we didn't want them just parking their vehicles in neighborhoods and other streets and walking away. So it was a negotiation to balance their need to get downtown and get them to park in controlled areas."

⁸ Texts with S. Bell (OPB00001644): [2022-01-31, 4:01:52 PM] Diane Deans: What is the answer to why were heavy vehicles allow (sic) to occupy the core especially when they can be used as weapons? [2022-01-31, 4:03:28 PM] Steve Bell: We don't have a legal right to deny them. They aren't weapons as matter of course and haven't been used as that. Charter protects right of mobility and right to demonstrate [2022-01-31, 4:27:05 PM] Diane Deans: If they leave can we ensure no more are allowed in? [2022-01-31, 4:28:21 PM] Steve Bell: Yes. We have it cordoned off for that reason. U can't drive into that area now. [2022-01-31, 4:28:59 PM] Diane Deans: Ok good.



Deans Removal

On February 15, 2022, a day after Chief Sloly resigned, the OPSB had an *in camera* meeting where it decided on a new interim Chief with experience managing this type of situation.⁹ According to Councillor Deans, the OPSB did not want to give Deputy Chief Bell the role because they did not want to put him in a difficult situation. First, Deputy Chief Bell might become the target of public anger in the same way that Chief Sloly had, thus affecting his ability to compete for the permanent role. Second, the ranks of the senior command were already depleted and making him the Acting Chief would further deplete them. Third, he had been involved in the operations to date and the OPSB was not clear on what his role had been (or not been) in the internal conflicts.

The OPSB was of the view that an Acting Chief of Police who was not currently a member of the OPS was a viable approach. The SOLGEN advisor provided a short-list of potential candidates for the role of Acting Chief of Police and from that list Matthew Torigian was the most promising because he had the best experience, knowledge (both as a Chief of Police and as a Deputy Minister) and connections to put an end to the protests. He also did not want the role on a permanent basis. This temporary hiring would be a bridge to then run a proper hiring process for a new Chief of Police. The OPSB proceeded to hire him expeditiously.

According to Councillor Deans, when she explained this situation to the Mayor the following day, he was very unhappy about the OPSB's decision and lack of consultation with his office and City Council. On that same day and shortly after the meeting with the Mayor, Mr. Arpin told Councillor Deans that she needed to resign, but she refused. Mr. Arpin said a motion would be brought to remove her from the OPSB. In Councillor Deans' opinion, the Mayor used the hiring of Mr. Torigian as a pretext or an excuse to remove her from the OPSB.

Councillor Scott Moffatt brought forward a motion to remove Councillors Deans and Meehan from the OPSB. The motion did not include Councillor King. Ultimately, Council voted to remove Deans from the OPSB. Councillors Meehan and King resigned in protest. She sees her removal as political and a settling of old scores.

⁹ Confidential Minutes 53 (OPB00001649).